

FACULTY OF MUSIC UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

# Contemporary Music Ensemble

ROBIN ENGELMAN, conductor

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Tuesday, March 26, 1991

8 pm

Walter Hall

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## PROGRAM

Scherzo (All the Way Around and Back)

Charles Ives  
(c. 1908)

Three Page Sonata

Stephen Clarke, piano

Charles Ives  
(1905)

Adagio Sostenuto

Charles Ives  
(before 1912)

Allegretto Sombreoso

Charles Ives  
(before 1912)

Scherzo (over the Pavements)

Charles Ives  
(1906-1913)

Jennifer Hellen, Martina Kurth, piccolo/flute  
Arthur Luck, Linda Switt, clarinets  
Heidi Postl, English horn; Catherine MacDonnell, bassoon  
Tim Birtch, trumpet; Julia Yang, horn  
Ross Harwell, Rob Tilley, trombones; Alex Kidston, tuba  
Agnes Lee, harp; Stephen Clarke, piano  
Jon Saulnier, percussion; Brian Joyce, bass

The Viola in My Life (1)

Morton Feldman  
(1970)

Jennifer Hellen, flute; Jon Saulnier, percussion  
Stephen Clarke, piano; Don Lyons, viola; Rosemary Thomson, cello

L'oiseau blessé

Denis Gougeon  
(1987)

Jennifer Hellen, flute

Gentle lament, this music tells of an injury...  
an injury of the body? of the soul? Only this well-known bird  
knows how to respond.



Poem in the Dark

words by Nelly Sachs: "Moses Pergament"

Why this sadness?

This outpouring flood of world destruction?

Why in your eyes

these twinkling pearls of light that ordain death?

Slowly we glide down the sharp slopes of the cliff of horror.

It looks at us with its starlit deaths -

to dust petrified afterbirth -

where the bird song is caught mute,

and lips have interned the wine of language.

Oh, the brilliance which us awoke:

you took our oppressive weariness

into the darkening twilight homeland of your arms

and left us, then, lonely

in the night

*(Swedish translation Moses Pergament*

*English translation Silja Ikäheimonen-Lindgren)*

Catherine Duff, mezzo-soprano

Martina Kurth, bass flute and flute; Ross Harwell, trombone

Brian Joyce, bass; Jacquie McCaig, percussion

★ ★ Intermission ★ ★

Obelis - The Apple Tree

Veronika Krausas  
(1990)

Vivian Chon, Karen Graves, violins

Bridget LaMarche, Michelle Speller, violas

Rosemary Thomson, Jeremy Hughes, celli

Jennifer Hellen, flute; Arthur Luck, clarinet

Heidi Postl, oboe; Catherine MacDonnell, bassoon

Jacquie McCaig, Jon Saulnier, percussion

Hemispheres

Brian Joyce, string bass

Richard Gibson  
(1987)

The Jabberwock in Ogden Nash's Dining Room

Lothar Klein  
(1988)

Lisa Lindo, Olga Mychajluk, Laurie Farrow, Marian Sjölander, sopranos  
Alexa Wing, Rosemary Thomson, Vanessa Grant, Nanette Masson, altos

Andy Morris, Steven Wassmansdorf, Morris Palter, percussion

The Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimle in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogroves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he sought.  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through, and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
Oh, fabjous day! Callooh! callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

The Private Dining Room

Miss Rafferty wore taffeta,  
Miss Cavendish word lavender.  
We ate pickerel and mackerel  
And other lavish provender.  
Miss Cavendish was Lalage,  
Miss Rafferty was Barbara.  
We gobbled pickled mackerel  
And broke the candelabra  
Miss Cavendish in lavender,  
In taffeta, Miss Rafferty,  
The girls in taffeta lavender,  
And we, of course, in mufti.

Miss Rafferty wore taffeta,  
The taffeta was lavender,  
Was lavend, lavender, lavenderest,  
As the wine improved the provender.  
Miss Cavendish wore lavender,  
The lavender was taffeta.  
We boggled mackled pickerel,  
And bumpers did we quaffeta.  
And Lalage wore lavender,  
And lavender wore Barbara,  
Rafferta taffeta Cavender lavender  
Barbara abracadabra.

Miss Rafferty in taffeta  
Grew definitely raffisher.  
Miss Cavendish in lavender  
Grew less and less stand-offisher.  
With Lalage and Barbara

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogroves  
And the mome raths outgrabe.  
*Lewis Carroll*

We grew a little pickereled,  
We ordered Mumm and Roederer  
Because the bubbles tickereled.

But lavender and taffeta  
Were gone when we were soberer.  
I haven't thought for thirty years  
Of Lalage and Barbara.  
*Ogden Nash*

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### PROGRAM NOTES

#### **Charles Ives**

Ives (1874-1954) first began to compose music at the age of twelve and, by the age of fourteen, he had become the youngest salaried church organist in the state of Connecticut. As an undergraduate at Yale, Ives was frequently criticized for his use of unresolved dissonant harmonies in his compositions. The extent of his experimentation included a fugue in four keys, and polytonal dissonance as used in the *First String Quartet*. After 1905, Ives began to compose with a new self-confidence, with an explosion of unique "far-out" music: first the *Three-page Sonata* starting with the motif B-A-C-H, then in 1906 *Over the Pavements and All the Way Around and Back* ("foul ball - and the base runner on 3rd has to go all the way back to 1st"). The period between 1911 to 1920 were extremely productive years of composition that included the *Concord Sonata* (1911), *Adagio Sostenuto* (1912) for piano, *The Fourth of July*, *Decoration Day*, and *Ive's Fourth Symphony* for orchestra. By the 1930's, Ives's music was being received with enthusiasm - both in North America and Europe. His song repertoire, hymn tune arrangements and choral works have become the best known of his output.

Further to the *Three Page Sonata*, John Kirkpatrick stated: "Apparently he composed it as a take-off of a sonata, and years later wrote a memo on a bit of music paper that he pinned on a copy of the Mercury printing: "made mostly as a joke to knock the mollicoddles out of their boxes and to kick out the softy ears!"

Given this take-off character, it is surprising that the place contains the B-A-C-H motif over forty times (counting retrogressions but not variants with changed intervals) -- a theme Ives would have regarded most reverently. It is just possible that, after concocting *Holding Your Own* for Gustave Bach in 1903 "in memory of his old forebear," Ives may have felt he'd treated Bach facetiously, and been haunted by an impulse toward some worthy act of devotion. What more worthy than a vigorous, composition aspiring to a Bach-like integrity and filled with Bach's name, first like a statement of allegiance, later like a private secret.

### **The Viola in My Life (1)**

**Morton Feldman**

Feldman (1926-1987) is probably best known for his artistic association with composer John Cage. He was also influenced by abstract expressionist painters from 1950, and his compositions are immediately recognizable for their sparse instrumental scoring and sublime dynamic range. Many of his works--such as the *Projection* series (1950-1951) -- are concerned with combinations of timbres, densities of sound, and soft dynamic levels. His sounds must often be performed without audible attack or sound fluctuation to create the "pure tone" quality which has become a trademark of his music. An important element in Feldman's compositional style has been to develop sound by means other than precise pitch relationships. *The Viola in My Life* is a cycle composed in 1970 and consists of individual compositions utilizing several instrumental combinations -- both large and small -- with the viola. The overall framework of this cycle is simple in texture and incorporates traditional notation with regard to pitch and tempo. The exact note value is important in the execution of a performance of this work, so that each gradual and subtle dynamic change can be heard in the muted solo viola.

*Notes by Dean Jobin-Bevans  
History and Literature, Year 4*

### **L'oiseau blessé**

**Denis Gougeon**

Born in Granby in 1951, Denis Gougeon completed a bachelor's degree in musicology at the Vincent D'Indy school of music and obtained a masters degree in composition from the University of Montreal after studies with André Prévost and Serge Garant. Denis Gougeon has been awarded several prizes for his compositions, among them: the First Prize of the CAPAC competition in 1981 for his work *Voix Intimes*. He has received several commissions for different instrumental groups, from solo to orchestra. Besides his main activity as a composer, he teaches at the University of Montreal, he is a chronicler for the Radio-Canada program *Musiques Actuelles* and he is also a member of Les Événements du Neuf, a concert society dedicated to new music.



## **Obelis**

**Veronika Krausas**

Obelis is Lithuanian for apple tree. Visualize a tree - the roots are the foundation which grow and reach upward. The leaves, the wind, and the creatures hover magically around the branches of the apple tree, like the elements in a Chagall painting. In the midst of this activity remains the tree itself, the trunk supporting this life. In Lithuania, the apple tree also symbolizes love. V.K.

Veronika Krausas is a fourth year composition student at the Faculty of Music studying with Harry Freedman.

## **Hemispheres**

**Richard Gibson**

Richard Gibson, professor of composition at the Université de Moncton and freelance jazz bassist, wrote this piece for one of the bass students attending the school at the time, Bernard LeBlanc. The composition is based on a practising bass student who, in reality, wants to play jazz, but must slog through studies and learn wierd harmonies in order to pass his school's requirements. In the end, the bass player says, "Qu'est-ce que le baiser, je veux jouer le Jazz!" and gives up practising. -- Brian Joyce

## **The Jabberwock in Ogden Nash's Dining Room**

**Lothar Klein**

Lothar Klein is Professor of Theory and Composition in the Faculty of Music. German-born, he studied composition in Berlin with Boris Blacher, and received his academic training in the U.S. He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Minnesota. His music has been performed by major orchestras in Canada, the United States and Europe, and at international music festivals at Tanglewood, Mexico City, and Berlin. He has provided the following comments:

The composer's title compounds two of the great nonsense poets in the English language - Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* and Ogden Nash's *The Private Dining Room*. In selecting texts for his vocal composition, Lothar Klein shows wide literary taste ranging from Hebrew Psalm settings, Hemingway, Emily Dickinson to playground rhymes. *Jabberwocky* seems to meditate between the avant-garde and the lighter aspects of the composer's style.

The Faculty of Music gratefully acknowledges the copying assistance of the Canadian Music Centre.



